

Illinois Latino Agenda

2018 Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

Latinos now account for the largest minority group in Illinois at 17.3 % of the total population. After 40 percent growth since 2000, more than 2.2 million Latinos (2,214,749 as of July 2017) are currently living, working, and raising families in the prairie state. While Latino contributions reverberate throughout Illinois in the form of tax contributions and consumer spending, home-ownership, and small business development, the increasing presence of Latinos has also been felt at the ballot box. The Latino share of all Illinois voters rose from 5.4% of the electorate in 2012 to 9.2% in 2016, an increase from 295,000 to 527,000. The impact of the Latino vote in Illinois has strengthened.

The Illinois Latino Agenda, the largest coalition of Latino-led nonprofits in the state, has created a candidate questionnaire to elicit information from candidates that will help inform Latino voters as they cast their ballots for the next Governor of Illinois. With more than 40 member organizations across the Chicago metropolitan region, the Illinois Latino Agenda reaches over 250,000 people each year in a wide range of areas including health care, family services, education, and small business development.

By arming the Latino electorate with salient information, the coalition aims to foster greater civic participation in the upcoming gubernatorial election.

State Budget & Operations:

1. The Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Family & Children Services each serve an increasing Latino population throughout the state, but none of the administrators for these agencies is Latino. Currently, Illinois has only two Latino Administrators as heads of State Agencies. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration provide the inclusion of Latinos in leadership and decision-making positions within the executive office, state agencies, and boards & commissions?
2. Latinos account for 17 percent of Illinois population after experiencing a 40 percent growth since 2000. However, only a very small percent of state grants to nonprofit agencies are directed to Latino-led nonprofit organizations for the provision of critical programs and services. If elected/re-elected, how will your state budget priorities align with the needs and concerns of Latino residents?
3. Many state agencies rely on the interpreter line contracted by CMS to communicate with their clients or customers. Bilingual workers are an asset to the state because they can communicate directly with English and Limited English Proficient clients. If elected/re-elected, will you commit to increasing the number of bilingual staff within state agencies?

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Education:

4. Latino children account for 1-in-4 children under age 5 in Illinois, but many Latino children and families have limited access to early childhood education, including home-visiting and preschool programs. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration expand access and allocate appropriate resources to augment early childhood services and programs for this specific population?
5. School districts are now serving English language learners in 92 out of Illinois' 102 counties. The academic performance of English Learners is also a more amplified component to school accountability (i.e. more than half of Illinois schools will now have to report on their outcomes). Schools across the state, however struggle to hire a sufficient number of bilingual licensed teachers whose support is most optimal for student academic achievement. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration prioritize efforts to increase the number of bilingual licensed teachers in Illinois across PreK-12th grade?
6. Since 2005, English Learner student population has increased by 47%. The staffing within the Illinois State Board of Education is critical to provide the necessary oversight and support to ensure school code and federal civil rights are upheld and protected. These rights also reflect research-based best practice for optimal academic outcomes. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration appropriately staff the Department of English learners to best support the needs of this vibrant and growing population?

Economic Development

7. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration encourage job creation in low-income, Latino communities? Please describe the tools and/or incentives you will utilize to bolster economic development?
8. Latinos represent the fastest growing segment of Illinois' workforce and are responsible for virtually all of the state of Illinois' labor market growth. However, many adult workers lack the skills to compete for jobs in high-growth sectors of the economy. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration foster job-training opportunities for Latino workers?

Health Care:

9. Latino-led nonprofit organizations currently play a significant role in the provision of a wide range of health care services in Latino communities. If elected/re-elected what steps will your administration take to ensure that the new networks set up by Managed Care entities include Latino-led providers and how will you hold other entities accountable for providing culturally and linguistically responsive services across the state?

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10. With registration in the IMPACT system to become an Integrated Health Home beginning September 17th, if elected/re-elected, how will your administration ensure that community agencies who serve the Latino communities are not excluded from the IHH roll out?
11. Illinois currently provides several free/affordable diagnostic services such as the breast and Cervical Cancer Program, which was established by the CDC to increase early diagnosis of breast and cervical cancer among the uninsured and undocumented residents in most states of the union. However, the program does not fund treatment modality for cancer positive women. Cervical and breast cancer are among the top three causes of mortality among Latina women. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration address this need?

Immigrant Integration:

12. The Office of New Americans provided a wide range of important services to the state's diverse immigrant community. What is your vision for immigrant integration in Illinois and if elected/re-elected, how will your administration, staff this office as well as implement and monitor effective policies?
13. The Illinois Trust Act has proven instrumental in keeping an open line of communication between the community and local law enforcement officials. This has enabled law enforcement to continue doing their jobs effectively. If elected/re-elected, how will you ensure that the Illinois Trust Act is enforced?
14. If finalized, experts anticipate that the proposed Public Charge rule change would cause major increases in poverty, hunger, and unmet housing and health care needs. One in four children in Illinois have at least one immigrant parent, consequently the proposed rule change would result in a poorer, sicker, hungrier Illinois. If elected/re-elected, will you commit to publicly speak out against the Public Charge rule change?

Census 2020:

It is essential that all Illinois residents are counted in the 2020 Census. However, the 2020 Census may include untested questions and new methods of deployment that could discourage some Illinois residents from participating.

15. Illinois could potentially lose two Congressional seats and a significant portion of our State's annual allotment of \$19.7 billion federal dollars, if residents are reluctant or unable to respond. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration help ensure a full and fair count? How will you support local governments and community organizations that perform Census outreach and assist people with completing the Census?

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Housing:

16. If elected/re-elected, how will you address homelessness in Illinois? What role, if any, will your administration play in developing and implementing a statewide strategy to end homelessness along with supporting or coordinating municipal efforts?

17. There has not been a comprehensive capital plan in IL in nearly a decade. One state strategy to promote affordable housing is the creative use of tax credits, i.e. the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit. If elected/re-elected, in addition to existing tax credit strategies, how will your administration approach a capital plan to assure appropriate and equitable funding to ensure the development of affordable housing?

Optional

What do you want Latino voters to remember about you when they enter the voting booth?